

Creation:

The basis for our church's teaching on marriage finds itself at the beginning in the creation narratives. Genesis one and two are two separate creation accounts. Genesis one describes creation in seven days, each of which is directed by God. On the sixth day, God comes to the highlight of creation. "So God created humankind in his image, in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them. God blessed them, and God said to them, 'Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth and subdue it;...'" Genesis 1:27-28a. In this account, Adam and Eve are created at the same time.

In this account we come to the very first commandment given humanity. The call to be fruitful and multiply is essential to the ongoing creation and is a gift from God.

In the second creation account, it is Adam who is created first. He is the one who receives the commandment meant for all humanity expressed in Gen. 2:17: "...but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall die."

God sees that the man is living in isolation. There is no helper. There is no mate. Out of the animals that are created there is not one that adequately serves the purpose of Adam's mate in equality. God then causes a deep sleep upon the man and out of this man makes woman. The making of woman is distinct from that of Adam and the other animals, for they were all made out of the dust.

Adam awakens and God brings her to Adam. Adam recognizes the woman as being of himself. The chapter concludes with an interesting statement. "Therefore a man leaves his father and his mother and clings to his wife, and they become one flesh. And the man and his wife were both naked, and were not ashamed." Gen. 2:24-25.

The coming together of man and woman becoming one flesh serves two purposes. One of course is procreation. A second is the deepening of love between a man and woman.

This conclusion offers an example of how Lutheran's interpret Scripture. Adam and Eve do not have human parents. There would be no means of understanding this from their perspective about the man leaving father and mother and clinging to spouse. Verse 24 answers a question that would be on the mind of the original hearers of this creation account. Such question would be, "Why do people get married?" This is an example of looking at the plain meaning of the text.

This text also establishes marriage as the only normative context for sexual relationships. As David Glesne points out in his book Understanding Homosexuality: Perspectives for the Local Church that there is only one distinction prior to the fall and that is a heterosexual distinction between male and female. Other distinctions along racial, cultural, linguistic or sexual orientation occur after the fall of humanity in Genesis 3.

Genesis three starts with a dialog between Eve and the Serpent. The serpent tells half truths. In verse four we hear the serpent say, "You will not die." This is a half truth. You will not die in that particular moment. The process of death however will begin. The second half truth is the found in verse 5, "...for God knows that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil." Our eyes are opened. We know good and evil. But we often choose the varying degrees of evil.

In eating what was forbidden by God, the ordered boundary is broken and creation becomes wounded. Being like God introduces us to the things that are not healthy for our lives. In the fall, trust is broken.

From this event comes our teaching about original sin. As stated in the second article of the Augsburg Confession. "Furthermore, it is taught among us that since the fall of Adam, all human beings who are born in the natural way are conceived and born in sin. This means that from birth they are full of evil lust and inclination and cannot by nature possess true fear of God and true faith in God. Moreover, this same innate disease and original sin is truly sin and condemns to God's eternal wrath all who are not in turn born anew through baptism and the Holy Spirit."

Remember, we are all sinners regardless of any human distinctions we wish to make, Caucasian/African American, rich/poor, male/female, clergy/laity, Christian/Islam, homosexual/heterosexual, etc. We all stand in need of God's grace.